

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY'S PUBLIC LISTENING SESSIONS

NATIONAL AGENDA ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE AGING

APRIL 29, 2003

SUNSET VILLAGE ON UCLA Campus

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Semi retired/retired registered or better yet, certified occupational health and safety professionals can provide the vanguard for promoting anticipation, identification, evaluation, and control of environmental health hazards affecting Senior Citizens before becoming major medical health problems.

These individuals possess the necessary training and experience to promote environmental hazards reduction utilizing standardized resources available through the Department of Health Services (DHS), Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), National Institute for Environmental Health Science (NIEHS), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), State and County health departments, the American Red Cross (ARC).

Perhaps a systems approach for residential inspection similar to Health Department restaurant inspection programs could be established and funded to support the needs of the population from an environmental hazards mitigation process. Is such a comprehensive program in existence that could be modeled and expanded to encompass urban areas?

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Developing a National Agenda on the Environment and the Aging is a significant, practical approach addressing environmental hazards affecting the entire U.S. population and not only Seniors.

My interest describing 3 environmental issues during the allotted time reflects the magnitude facing our population.

1. Slips, trips and falls affecting all Senior Citizens. What mitigation processes can be promoted to significantly reduce the conditions leading to injuries and fatalities?
2. Respiratory agents in the form of particulates emanating from worn rubber tires and brake linings. These particulates in an urban environment darken residents' lungs. What effect does particulate inhalation have on Seniors with compromised respiratory breathing ability and immune systems?
3. Exposure to bird and animal fecal material. Specifically what effects can occur in contact with volatilized pet urine, bird droppings on respiratory and immune systems.

Slips, trips, and falls severely impact Senior Citizens' ability to maintain a mobile, productive lifestyle. Engineering out home conditions to minimize/eliminate these hazards can significantly reduce medical intervention time, expenses, and avoid a degraded, dependent lifestyle burdening friends, relatives, neighbors.

A starting point might be providing adequate, easily maintained footwear providing adequate traction to the Senior. Are there significantly better light weight shoes and soles available to assist Seniors in avoiding these hazards?

Large numbers of automobiles contribute particulates from worn tires and brake linings. Dispersion of these particulates fall into adjacent roadway areas. Lung darkening occurs from inhalation of these particulates leading to respiratory distress and potential illness. What means can be employed to reduce exposure to these types of particulates? Other options besides residing in a High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filtered environment should be considered to minimize particulate exposure.

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